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**When you support
Extension, local
communities
benefit
economically from
development of
adventure tourism
enterprises.**

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE *Changing Lives*



The Pine Mountain Scenic Trail Project and Letcher County Extension Agent were featured in the New York Times, promoting tourism in the region as the expansion of the trail began in 2008.

Extension Leads Trail Blazing Efforts in Kentucky Communities

Extension professionals contribute to an increase in economic development by advising local communities, assisting in grant applications, planning trails, organizing volunteers, and providing educational information and leadership for tourism.



In 2015, the economic impact of Kentucky tourism was \$13.4 billion with 180,000 tourism related jobs, a 7% increase since 2010.

*Scottie Ellis
Kentucky Department of Travel and Tourism*

The Kentucky Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet has outlined a plan to “showcase the beauty and variety of Kentucky terrain” by developing a web of trails that connect across the state. Local governments are responsible for the planning, funding, and development of hiking, biking, all-terrain vehicles (ATV), horseback, and water trails. Extension professionals serve as leaders and facilitators for local trail efforts.

Fourteen communities have been designated as “trail towns” and 30 other communities have applied. For example, Harlan, Letcher and Ohio County Extension agents provided professional expertise in trail planning, grant writing, small business development, and creating marketing plans.

In Harlan County, an Extension agent assisted the Tri-Cities Trail Town Taskforce by identifying community assets and recruiting volunteers and sponsors. An \$826,000 federal transportation grant allowed for five miles of abandoned railroad beds to be acquired and rehabilitated to a multi-purpose, non-motorized trail. The funds have enabled new trail construction, signage and parking. Harlan County is a certified trail town.

The Pine Mountain State Scenic Trail started over 14 years ago in Letcher County and links Harlan and Pike Counties via biking and hiking trails. The newest trail, Devil John’s Moonshine Trail, is seven miles with numerous historical points of interest. County agents and specialists helped with the planning and construction of the trail. New businesses have developed in Whitesburg, including bike and adventure equipment stores to support local residents and tourists.

An Ohio County Extension agent worked with community partners and trail task forces in Beaver Dam, Hartford, and the northern part of the County. The Dundee Narrows opened a picnic area by the old iron bridge and kayaking access in 2015 with local support. The 2015 Recreational Trails Project awarded Ohio County \$60,000 to construct a ramp to improve access to the Blue Water Trail on Rough River. The Extension-sponsored physical activity programs in Ohio County reached over 900 people



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and over 260 participants reported adopting practices that ensure safe water activity.

Extension is proud to provide leadership and expertise in natural resource development. The efforts create opportunities for local residents to expand interest in the environment and physically activity, increase tourism, and improve the economy of Kentucky counties.